

*The Community of Hope
International*

Connections

Winter 2017



A letter from the President and founder...

Dear Community of Hope family,

I want to express my profound gratitude to each of you for your loving gifts of healing prayer and unending faith that carried me through these long months of recovery from the auto accident. By God's grace I am back at work, have completed twelve sessions of physical therapy and am driving again.

During this time of recovery The Rule's three vows of obedience, stability and continual conversion have been a vital help as I regain my physical and spiritual balance. And I am deeply grateful for the spiritual strength gained from reading The Rule every day.

I look forward to seeing you at our June conference in San Antonio. It is going to be a beautiful time together in a beautiful place.

In the peace and love of Christ,

The Rev. Dr. Helen Appelberg



A Joyous Welcome to These New Centers!

First United Methodist Church
Russellville, AR November 11, 2016



St. Barnabas on the Desert
Scottsdale, AZ November 15, 2016

St. Philip's Episcopal Church
Frisco, TX January 13, 2017

Church of the Epiphany
Richardson, TX January 24, 2017



*Always
We Begin Again!*



20th Annual Community of Hope International Conference

Friday June 2 to Sunday June 4, 2017 at
Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas

with speakers:

The Rev. Dr. Steven Peay

Professor of Homiletics and Church History;
Dean and President, Nashotah House
Theological Seminary, Nashotah WI

Carol Perry, SU

Resident Bible Scholar at Marble
Collegiate Church in New York City.

Watch for more details and registration information at
www.cohinternational.org



Having the idea, reaching the goal, the search and success.

Several years ago, your Community of Hope International (all volunteer) Board of Directors determined that the Community of Hope's mission would be carried out with greater effectiveness if we could hire an experienced professional leader to guide and lead us through many of the issues that we deal with on a daily basis.

This goal could not be reached until several years of active fundraising would put us in a financial position to hire a part time Executive Director. Once we felt financially capable of hiring someone, the search began for the person most suited to meet our goals and expectations.

This was not a simple search since the description of job qualifications included requirements such as:

1. Exhibit excellence in organizational management with ability to teach, coach, manage, and develop high performance teams with a volunteer workforce, largely lay chaplains;
2. Be graced with a positive can-do attitude and a joyful, friendly and listening presence to others; strong written and verbal communication skills;
3. Have an understanding of financial business for non-profit organizations;
4. And last, but certainly not least – Have a heart and passion for the mission of the Community of Hope International.

In November 2016, after months of pouring over applications of many well qualified candidates, the Board of Directors voted to hire Jennifer Sassin as our part time Executive Director. "Meet" Jennifer on the next page!



Sister Joan Chittister's synopsis of the Fourth Rule of St. Benedict - The Twelve Steps of Humility.

Humility leads us:

1. To recognize that God is God.
2. To know that God's will is best for us.
3. To be willing to receive direction.
4. To endure and don't grow weary.
5. To acknowledge faults.
6. To be content with less than the best.
7. To let go of image making.
8. To learn from the community.
9. To listen to others.
10. To abandon the urge to ridicule.
11. To speak kindly.
12. To be simple; to be serene.



*February 14
We are reminded of love...
and what better reminder is there than
1 Corinthians 13:1-13?*

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love.
But the greatest of these is love.



Meet our Community of Hope International Executive Director



Jennifer Sassin earned her bachelor's degree in Biology and Chemistry at the University of Houston. She taught high school science for several years and then joined Brown and Root in Houston where she worked in many areas including project management, cost analysis for large petrochemical plant building projects, and human resources for their Maintenance Services group. She retired for a few years to be a full time mom to her two young sons. When the boys were in school, she was asked to write curriculum for large engineering and construction companies on Total Quality Management, work that later led to her work as a freelance technical writer — writing instruction manuals, project management manuals, and marketing materials for various companies including Bechtel, Brown and Root, The Marion Group, NACE (National Association of Corrosion Engineers), and super major oil and gas companies.

Jennifer and husband Frank raised their sons in Houston. Jennifer's initial COH training was at Holy Spirit Episcopal Church in Houston in 1999. Jennifer's mother, Pat Reed (who is a friend of COH and often comes to our Annual Conference at Camp Allen) still attends Palmer Episcopal Church in Houston.

Several years ago, Jennifer and Frank moved to Virginia near Washington D.C. Frank had accepted a job with KBR and Jennifer was able to continue her freelance writing work. They joined Pohick Episcopal Church and in 2004 Jennifer began working with the Assistant Rector to start a Community of Hope class and in 2005 offered the first COH class there.

She often comes back to Houston to visit her mother, her son Gabe, his wife Maggie and their two sons, Landon and Liam, and to attend the annual COHI Conference.

In 2012, Jennifer was asked to join the COHI Board as a Regional Representative to the Atlantic Region. At that time her church was the only active COHI center in the Atlantic Region. Now there are 10 active centers in the Atlantic Region. Jennifer also serves as Regional Representative to the Malawi Region. Now Carolyn Cockroft from Pohick Episcopal Church, who has been involved in COHI since 2005, is taking position as the Atlantic Region Representative.

For the last 2 years, Jennifer has been the Secretary of the Board of Directors and as you might imagine, with her writing background, we may never again have such thorough and well written minutes from our board meetings!

Frank Sassin is retiring from his job in Washington, D.C. and Jennifer and Frank will soon move to Canyon Lake in the Texas Hill Country. There is one sad part to this move. Their son Nick and his wife Megan live in the D.C. area and have a new baby. Jennifer has been helping with childcare for little Lucas and she and Frank will sorely miss this important part of their family. However, she is working on finding them jobs in Texas!



In her own words - Jennifer's goals as COHI Executive Director

“To share my love of our ministry with anyone who will listen! There is so much fertile ground in which to plant the seeds of our unique pastoral care ministry. Through the teachings of Benedict we learn how to love God and each other in community while seeking and serving the Christ in others.”

“To nurture and strengthen our community by finding ways to better support each other in our ministry. I am looking forward to working closely with the COHI Executive Board and our regional representatives as well as reaching out to our centers to discover what is working well and what may need improvement. Any and all input is encouraged and welcomed!”



Here's what's happening in COHI Regions!



ATLANTIC REGION

CAROLYN COCKROFT



Grace Episcopal Church, Alexandria, VA commissions its first COHI class on January 29, 2017!
Front row: Mother Leslie Steffensen, Eza Sabatini, Mary Hix, Jennifer Sassin (visiting), and Anne Caputo.
Rear row, left to right: Eric Waskowicz, Jan Wolff, Julia McClung, Jan Spence, Anne Borris, Nancy Robinson, Lynn Rohr.

HERITAGE REGION

BEVERLY DAVIS

PAT BEACHY



The first COHI class at Christus St. Elizabeth Hospital in Beaumont, TX. They were commissioned on December 6th, 2016

SOUTHWEST REGION

CATHERINE MILLER



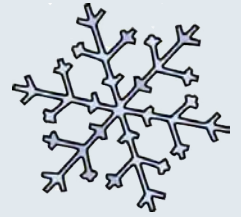
Pictured is the 2017 COHI class at Church of the Good Shepherd, Dallas, TX. They began their training in January. Catherine Miller says, "we have a great group representing four Episcopal churches and one Lutheran church." Last year the COHI training class at Good Shepherd included members from other churches in the area and from that training class, a new center was formed - St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Frisco, TX.

Front Row (left to right): Andrew Sanders (Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, Irving), Ingrid Owen (Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, Dallas), Phoenicia Eilert (Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, Irving), Rev. Canon Victoria Heard (Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, Irving), Danna Jackson (Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, Dallas), Jacquie Acers (Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, Irving), LaDonna Cade (Episcopal Church of the Ascension)
Back Row (left to right): Molly Brown (Resurrection Episcopal Church, Plano), Lisa Stone (Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd), Catherine Miller, Eunice Cheshire (Prince of Peace Catholic Church), Miles Holder (Deacon in the Lutheran Church) and Jacqueline Haden (Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, Irving.)

What a wonderful gift we give when we invite members from other denominations and other churches to join our Community of Hope training. These new lay pastoral caregivers bond with our community and then take the joyful and giving art of pastoral care (and their sense of Benedictine Spirituality and community) back to their church, equipped with the tools to begin a Community of Hope Center there.



More Happenings!



UTAH REGION

THE REV. CANON DIANA JOHNSON

Pictured below is the commissioning/re-commissioning on January 29, 2017 at the Cathedral Church of St. Mark, Salt Lake City, UT. The Right Reverend Scott B. Hayashi performed the commissioning. It was a wonderful and moving occasion. Those present represent five Episcopal churches in the Diocese and one member of the United Methodist Church. They are a wonderful group of people! Sadly, one of the people in the new class died unexpectedly a few weeks before the commissioning. COH was important to her, so we made a certificate for her, named her at the ceremony and why she wasn't present and will present the certificate to her family.

Submitted by Diana Johnson



Front row (left to right): Clare Julian Carbone (new), Joy Prestridge, Ann Deyo, Camille Biexei (new), Christopher Wootton (new), Carolyn Ershler, Judy Hanley, Jan Zinn, Joesph Frank
Second row (left to right): Robert King (new), The Rev. Canon Diana Johnson, Soren Green (new), The Right Reverend Scott B. Hayashi, Mary McEntire (new), Josie Stone, Dr. Christopher LeCluyse
Missing from photo: Jill Trice (new) Jan Hafner (new- deceased)

Every once in a while, when Region Representatives travel to visit family or to vacation, they have the opportunity to visit churches and COH centers in other regions.



Pat Shaha, Regional Representative from the South Region, was visiting family in Arizona and - "On Sunday, my husband and I attended All Saints in Phoenix and had the occasion to visit with Sue Kapp who is their COH Facilitator. We exchanged our experiences within COH and within our churches. It was a very beneficial to talk and meet with others from COH."

pictured ~ Sue Kapp (left) and Pat Shaha



WEST TEXAS REGION



LIN BOUDREAUX



Commissioning picture above:
 Front row, (left to right): Carol Kopec, Jane Keen, Twyla Kellogg, Marty Worsley and Sandra Pyle.
 Back row (left to right): Rev. Stephen Carson, Kelvin Allen, and Ted Wise.

St. Francis Episcopal Church in Victoria TX commissioned their first COHI Class on December 18, 2016.

Three members of St. Francis had traveled to St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Rockport in 2015 to take the training along with members of St. Peter's.

When, Martha Bernhardt, Melanie Klotzman and Andrea Wise finished their training at St. Peter's and were commissioned, they carefully planned a class to be held for members at St. Francis. Their rector, Rev. Stephen Carson was a member of the class. He had encouraged Martha, Melanie and Andrea to begin a COHI center at St. Francis.

Martha Bernhardt sent in this picture with the comment, "Here is our group. As you can see they have their certificates. It was so special to see the spiritual change that came over everyone. What a wonderful experience for all of us. Thank you for introducing us to COHI. A life changing event!!"

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Wimberley, TX

Submitted by Connie Maverick

On Saturday, October 17, 10 people gathered for the educational opportunity offered by the Community of Hope at St. Stephen's Wimberley to learn about and walk the labyrinth at the church. Parishioner Bob Reed provided information about the history of the labyrinth and how it is used as a spiritual tool and a path of prayer. After his presentation, the participants walked the labyrinth which was an enriching experience for all who participated. When everyone had finished their walk, the group gathered in the outdoor chapel and shared what the experience had meant to them. Among the participants was Frances McMaster, an active Community of Hope minister who, at age 91, could not physically walk the labyrinth but used the time for meditation and was inspired by the poem to the right:



Walking the Labyrinth

The labyrinth is a Spiritual pathway purposely laid out upon the ground or floor, forming unpredictable twists and turns that seem meaningless and lead nowhere, but then I hear in the ear of my heart exactly what it means to me. I also know this path is not mine alone; others also seek and find their Truth, and I am filled with love knowing that they are near. We brush against one another as we walk our uncertain ways, and I am reassured to feel their presence even though we may travel in opposite directions. My heart whispers, "Do not be afraid. Each of you is part of the ultimate whole". Spirit banishes our confusion and we are flooded with peacefulness as each of us discovers the awaiting tranquil center.

